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## Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations



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# Who gets more disaster aid? Republican states. Experts explain that and more about FEMA

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**

**AP Science Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Federal disaster aid is nearly everywhere. About 94% of Americans live in a county that has gotten Federal Emergency Management Agency help for disasters since 2011.

But disaster aid — for decades a mostly bipartisan issue — is suddenly a political hot button after Hurricane Helene last year and this year's California wildfires. President Donald Trump and a conservative think tank have floated the possibility of shifting disaster response to the states, including eliminating FEMA or curtailing federal handouts.

Experts worry about that.

"Most states don't even have the ability, including Florida, to manage these disasters," without federal money and help, said Craig Fugate. Fugate has been a county emergency manager in Florida, head of the state of Florida's disaster office under a Republican governor and director of FEMA under President Barack Obama. Most states simply don't have enough money to handle big disasters, said Susan Cutter, director of the University of South Carolina's Hazards Vulnerability & Resilience Institute.

"They're going to suffer because they don't have capacities to deal with it without federal help."

Experts say every state gets



**A property owner who preferred not to give his name peers into the remains of the second floor unit where he lived with his wife while renting out the other units, on Manasota Key, in Englewood, Fla., following the passage of Hurricane Milton, Oct. 13, 2024.**

**Associated Press**

millions in federal help — and a little more goes to Republican states and congressional districts.

New York University's Rebuild By Design, a nonprofit that focuses on disaster prevention, created an atlas of the 795 non-medical and non-technological federal disasters since 2011, which they called climate disasters. It found that every state and all but a few hundred counties have been helped.

"It's clear that climate is not a red or blue challenge," said Amy Chester, the atlas creator and Rebuild by Design's director. "Communities

are suffering whether you are a red state or blue state." Since 2011, more than \$68.2 billion in FEMA aid has been spent on disasters that don't include the pandemic or oil spills. And that's payments just to governments, not people. Tens of billions more came — mostly from Housing and Urban Development — to people needing individual help to rebuild.

States with Republican governors or two Republican senators tend to have more disasters and get slightly more money per person than states with Democratic governors and senators, ac-

cording to an Associated Press analysis of Rebuild by Design's data.

States that now have Republican governors have gotten an average of \$222 per person in FEMA aid since 2011 with 475 federal declared disasters in 27 states. The 23 states with Democratic governors average 15% less at \$193 per person over 320 disasters.

The six swing states that voted for Joe Biden in 2020 and Donald Trump in 2024 — and states with split U.S. Senate delegations — get considerably less FEMA aid per person, averaging only \$35 per

capita. Those purple states have 15% of the country's population but get only 2.5% of the FEMA aid.

Overall, states that voted for Donald Trump in 2024 averaged 15% less in FEMA funds per person than those that voted for Kamala Harris, but that's mostly skewed by the six swing states of Nevada, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan and Georgia that get less than their share.

Red states with 42.7% of the population have 56.6% of the number of federally declared disasters and get half the FEMA aid. Blue states with 42.2% of the population and 35.8% of the number of disasters get 47.5% of the FEMA aid.

The disaster-heavy states that former FEMA chief Fugate calls his "frequent fliers" also tend to be more Republican. About two-thirds of the top 15 states in total FEMA funds, FEMA spending per person and number of federally declared disasters are Republican. Those include Florida, Louisiana, Alaska, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Mississippi.

Twelve congressional districts have had at least a dozen federally declared disasters since 2011; three-quarters of them are represented by Republicans. Those are in Kentucky, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Texas, Vermont and West Virginia. □



**Elon Musk arrives on stage to speak at an indoor Presidential Inauguration parade event in Washington, Monday, Jan. 20, 2025.**

**Associated Press**

By **CHRIS MEGIERIAN**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Elon

Musk is working for President Donald Trump as a "special government employee," ac-

## Musk is a 'special government employee,' the White House confirms

cording to a White House official, solidifying his controversial role in the administration but sidestepping some disclosure rules that are typical of federal workers.

The official, speaking Monday on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters, said that Musk has a government email address and office space in the White House complex. Musk, the world's richest man, has been granted broad latitude by Trump to reduce the size of the federal government. On Mon-

day morning, the headquarters of the U.S. Agency for International Development was abruptly shut down. Musk's team, known as the Department of Government Efficiency, also has received access to sensitive payment systems at the U.S. Treasury Department.

Democrats fear that Musk is consolidating power within the federal government, acting without accountability and potentially against the law. Special government employees are usually appointed to their position for

up to 130 days. It's unclear how standard rules on ethics agreements and financial disclosures will apply to Musk, who has billions of dollars in federal contracts with SpaceX, his rocket company.

Musk does not receive a paycheck for his work, the White House official said. Under federal guidelines, it's unlikely that he will need to file a public financial disclosure report. The official did not provide additional details apart from saying that Musk is following the law. □



# Justice Department restores funding for programs that provide guidance in immigration courts

By KATE BRUMBACK  
Associated Press

Two days after nonprofit groups sued the federal government over a stop-work order targeting programs that provide information and guidance to people facing deportation, the U.S. Justice Department reversed course and ordered that funding to the programs be restored.

The four federally funded programs educate people in immigration courts and detention centers about their rights and the complicated legal process. The Justice Department instructed the nonprofits on Jan. 22 "to stop work immediately" on the programs, citing an executive order targeting illegal immigration that President Donald Trump signed the day of his second inauguration.

A coalition of nonprofit groups filed a federal lawsuit Friday challenging the stop-work order and seeking to immediately restore access to the programs. The Justice Department rescinded its stop-work order for all four programs Sunday afternoon.

The nonprofit organizations, which had expressed concern that the absence of the programs left people



After waiting in a cue, people are led into a downtown Chicago building where an immigration court presides Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024, in Chicago.

Associated Press

to navigate the system on their own, had worried that due process rights would be violated and the backlogged immigration courts would be further bogged down.

The effects of the stop-work order were already being felt in the just over a week since it had entered into effect.

Ruby Robinson, managing attorney at the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center,

went to Detroit immigration court to post a notice saying the help desk the organization ran there was not available. That meant turning away people in the waiting room the help desk would have otherwise been able to help.

Despite the loss of federal funding, staff from the Amica Center for Immigrant Rights went to a Virginia detention center to provide services the day after

the stop-work order. They had spoken to about two dozen people when detention center staff escorted them out, telling them they could no longer provide those services, Amica executive director Michael Lukens said.

Lawyers running a help desk inside Chicago's busy immigration court provided services to more than 2,000 people in 2024. The National Immigrant Justice Center

started the effort in 2013 with private funding and expanded it three years later with federal funds.

After the stop-work order, the organization was providing scaled-down services, but they were unsure how long they would be able to continue that with the gap left by federal funding cuts, spokesperson Tara Tidwell Cullen said last week.

Several organizations had been told that posters informing people of their services and information about legal help hotlines have been removed from detention centers.

Congress allocates \$29 million a year for the four programs the Legal Orientation Program, the Immigration Court Helpdesk, the Family Group Legal Orientation and the Counsel for Children Initiative funding that's spread among various groups across the country providing the services, Lukens said, adding that the programs have broad bipartisan support. The amount is the same regardless of the number of people they're helping, and the organizations often do additional fundraising to cover their costs, he said. □

# Marchers protesting planned deportations block major freeway in Los Angeles

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Thousands of people protesting mass deportations planned by President Donald Trump marched in Southern California on Sunday, including in downtown Los Angeles where demonstrators blocked a major freeway for several hours. Protesters gathered in the morning on LA's historic Olvera Street, which dates to Spanish and Mexican rule, before marching to City Hall. They called for immigration reform and carried banners with slogans like "Nobody is illegal."

By the afternoon, marchers had blocked all lanes of U.S. 101, causing traffic to back up in both directions and on surface streets. The demonstrators sat down in lanes, while a cordon of California Highway Patrol officers stood by. It took more than five hours for the freeway to fully reopen, CHP Lt. Matt Gutierrez said Sunday evening.

The CHP and the Los Angeles Police Department said there were no reports of arrests. To the east, hundreds of people protested in the city of Riverside. Passing motorists honked and yelled out in support of demonstrators waving flags at an intersection, the Southern California News Group reported.

And in San Diego, hundreds rallied near the city's convention center on Sunday. In Texas, demonstrators gathered in downtown Dallas on Sunday in a pair of protests against recent arrests by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Dallas police told The Associated Press that approximately 1,600 people gathered between the two rallies.

Marchers carried Mexican and American flags and speakers expressed outrage about the rhetoric from Trump and his administration's moves to increase deportations.

Signs held by the protesters included one that read "Immigrants Make America Great." □



Demonstrators shut down the 101 freeway during a protest calling for immigration reform Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press



# Salvage crews remove large portion of commercial jet from river after deadly air collision near D.C.

By **DAVID R. MARTIN, MICHAEL R. SISAK and CLAUDIA LAUER**

**Associated Press**

**ARLINGTON, Va. (AP)** — Salvage crews have removed a large portion of a commercial jet from the Potomac River near Washington's Reagan National Airport on Monday, five days after a midair collision last week that killed 67 people. Authorities have said the operation to remove the plane will take several days and they will then work to remove the military helicopter involved in the crash.

The crash between the American Airlines jet and an Army helicopter over Washington D.C. on Wednesday was the deadliest U.S. air disaster since 2001.

Authorities have recovered and identified 55 of the 67 people killed in the crash and Washington, D.C., Fire and EMS Chief John Donnelly has said they are confident all will be found. Crews early Monday could be seen aboard a vessel with a crane.

More than 300 responders were taking part in the re-



**Rescue and salvage crews with cranes pull up the wreckage of an American Airlines jet in the Potomac River from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Monday, Feb. 3, 2025, in Arlington, Va.**

**Associated Press**

covery effort at any given time, officials said. Two Navy barges were also deployed to lift heavy wreckage.

Divers and salvage workers are adhering to strict protocols and will stop moving debris if a body is found, Col. Francis B. Pera of the Army Corps of Engineers

said Sunday. The "dignified recovery" of remains takes precedence over all else, he said.

Portions of the two aircraft that collided over the river Wednesday night near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport an American Airlines jet with 64 people aboard and an

Army Black Hawk helicopter with 3 aboard are being loaded onto flatbed trucks and will be taken to a hangar for investigation. The crash occurred when the jet, en route from Wichita, Kansas, was about to land.

The Black Hawk was on a training mission. There were

no survivors.

On Sunday, family members were taken in buses with a police escort to the Potomac River bank near where the two aircraft came to rest after colliding. The plane's passengers included figure skaters returning from the 2025 U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Wichita and a group of hunters returning from a guided trip. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Austin O'Hara, 28, of Lilburn, Georgia; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Loyd Eaves, 39, of Great Mills, Maryland; and Capt. Rebecca M. Lobach, of Durham, North Carolina, were in the helicopter.

Federal investigators were working to piece together the events that led to the collision. Full investigations typically take a year or more. Investigators hope to have a preliminary report within 30 days.

Wednesday's crash was the deadliest in the U.S. since Nov. 12, 2001, when a jet slammed into a New York City neighborhood just after takeoff, killing all 260 people on board and five on the ground. □

# New York shields abortion pill prescribers after a doctor was indicted in Louisiana

By **ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**  
**Associated Press**

**ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)** — New York Gov. Kathy Hochul on Monday signed a bill to shield the identities of doctors who prescribe abortion medications, days after a physician in the state was charged with prescribing abortion pills to a pregnant minor in Louisiana.

The new law, which took effect immediately, allows doctors to request for their names to be left off abortion pill bottles and instead list the name of their health care practices on medication labels.

The move came after a grand jury in West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana indicted New York Dr. Margaret Carpenter and her company on Friday for allegedly prescribing abor-

tion pills online to a pregnant minor.

The case appears to be the first instance of criminal charges against a doctor accused of sending abortion pills to another state, at least since the U.S. Su-

preme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

Hochul, a Democrat, said she would not sign an extradition request to send Carpenter to Louisiana and said authorities in Louisiana discovered the name of

the doctor because it was on the medication label.

"After today, that will no longer happen," the governor said at the bill signing. Prosecutors in Louisiana said the girl experienced a medical emergency after taking the medication and had to be transported to the hospital. It is not clear how far along she was in her pregnancy. The girl's mother, who was also charged, turned herself in to police on Friday.

District Attorney Tony Clayton, the prosecutor in the Louisiana case, said the arrest warrant for Carpenter is "nationwide" and that she could face arrest in states with anti-abortion laws.

Louisiana has a near-total abortion ban. Physicians convicted of performing abortions, including one

with pills, face up to 15 years in prison, \$200,000 in fines and the loss of their medical license.

Hochul said she would push for another piece of legislation this year that will require pharmacists to adhere to doctors' requests that their name is left off a prescription label.

Carpenter was previously sued by the attorney general of Texas for allegations of sending abortion pills to Texas, though that case did not involve criminal charges.

Pills have become the most common method of abortion in the U.S. and are at the center of various political and legal battles in the state-by-state patchwork of rules governing abortion since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. □



**New York Gov. Kathy Hochul speaks at a press conference, Wednesday, July 31, 2024, in the Bronx borough of New York.**

**Associated Press**



## Britain's Starmer seeks strong ties with both the EU and Donald Trump. That could be tricky

By JILL LAWLESS  
Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — Keir Starmer travels to Brussels on Monday, becoming the first British prime minister to attend a European Union leaders' meeting since the U.K. left the bloc five years ago. Starmer will head to dinner with EU leaders at Brussels's neoclassical Egmont Palace, walking a diplomatic and economic tightrope. He is seeking to rebuild ties with the EU while avoiding tariffs from protectionist U.S. President Donald Trump. Trump has slapped import taxes on the United States' biggest trading partners Canada, Mexico and China and says he will also impose tariffs on goods from the 27-nation EU, with which the U.S. has a trade deficit. His attitude toward Britain is more ambiguous. Trump said early Monday that "the U.K. is out of line but ... I think that one can be worked out." Starmer has stressed his desire for a good relationship with Trump. His spokesman said Britain has a "fair and balanced trading relationship" with the U.S. At a Brussels meeting with NATO chief Mark Rutte on Monday before the EU din-



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, left, and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte speak during a press conference at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Monday, Feb. 3, 2025.

Associated Press

ner, Starmer said the U.K. would not have to choose between Europe and the United States. "Both of these relationships are very important to us," Starmer told reporters. "If you look at our vital interests, it's really important we work with both, that we don't see it as an either-or." On the issue of tariffs, Starmer said, "it's early days, and I think what's really important is open and

strong trading relations. That's been the basis of my discussions with President Trump and I know that intense US-EU discussions are planned." Trump's trade battles complicate Starmer's aim of a "reset" with the EU after years of bitterness over Brexit. It's already complicated enough by Britain's domestic politics. Starmer wants to remove some of the red tape and

other barriers to trade with the bloc imposed by Brexit but has ruled out the two things that would make the most difference rejoining the bloc's customs union or single market. He also has resisted EU pressure for a youth mobility deal that would let young people from Britain and the EU live and work in the other's territory for a time. Starmer's center-left Labour Party government

is wary of riling populist politicians like Reform U.K. leader Nigel Farage, who is poised to pounce on any perceived "betrayal" of Brexit.

Starmer is aiming for relatively modest changes such as making it easier for artists to tour and for professionals to have their qualifications recognized, and seeking closer cooperation on law enforcement and security. EU politicians have welcomed the change of tone from Starmer's euroskeptic Conservative predecessors, but want concrete proposals, and inevitably compromises, from the U.K. Britain and the EU say they will hold a full leaders' summit later this year.

Ahead of the meeting in Brussels, Starmer said he would stress the importance of "keeping up the pressure" with sanctions on Russia to squeeze its "war machine" targeting Ukraine.

Trump's return to office has raised questions over U.S. support for Kyiv and for the trans-Atlantic military alliance itself. Trump has said that NATO countries should spend at least 5% of their GDPs on defense, up from the current 2% target. □

## Belgium has a new prime minister, one who long tried to gut the nation and seek regional autonomy

By RAF CASERT  
Associated Press

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — Belgium has a new prime minister whose political purpose was long to break up the nation, gut the state structures and give ever more autonomy to his northern Flanders at the cost of everyone else. Bart De Wever took the oath early Monday, looking straight at King Philippe, the latest monarch of a royal house he so long had little but disdain for because it symbolized the old concept of Belgian unity. "I swear allegiance to the king," he said. It was another indication how times change, and

bold demands for Flemish independence have made room for the hope of gradual change and finding a renewed balance between Dutch-speaking Flanders, with 6.7 million people, francophone Wallonia, with 3.7 million, and multilingual Brussels, with 1.2 million. The prime minister and leading ministers took the oath in Dutch and French while several others on the 15-member team from both sides of the linguistic divide stuck to their own language during a short ceremony at the Royal Palace. "You can ... not take part in a government and wait

until the system can be taken as a whole. I never believed in that," he told De Standaard newspaper. "The other option is to take part when you can, and obtain things for your community, and that is what we did." "When you don't take part, you are certainly left empty-handed," he added. Language issues are woven throughout the past century, as the French-dominated nation gradually made way for a balanced political scene while Wallonia's industrial prowess waned and Flanders' economic power rose. De Wever of the Flemish nationalist N-VA party suc-

ceeds Alexander De Croo, who has remained in office as a caretaker since the June elections last year.

De Wever will join his fellow European Union leaders at a summit in Brussels later Monday. □



New Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever, left, raises his hand to take an oath during a swearing in ceremony for the new government in front of Belgium's King Philippe at the Royal Palace in Brussels, Monday, Feb. 3, 2025.

Associated Press



# Rubio views a deportation flight in Panama as Trump prioritizes an immigration crackdown

By **MATTHEW LEE and JUAN ZAMORANO**

**Associated Press**

**PANAMA CITY (AP)** — U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio viewed a deportation flight carrying 43 migrants before it took off from Panama on Monday as President Donald Trump's administration prioritizes stopping people from making the journey to the United States.

On his second and final day in Panama City on a five-nation trip to Central America, Rubio turned his focus from the Panama Canal and Chinese influence to the issue the Republican president has championed most: immigration.

Rubio was on the tarmac for the departure of the flight, which was carrying 32 men and 11 women back to Colombia after they had crossed the Darien Gap and were stopped in Panama. It's unusual for a secretary of state to personally witness such a law enforcement operation, especially in front of cameras.

The State Department said such deportations send a strong message of deterrence and that the U.S. has provided Panama with financial assistance to the tune of almost \$2.7 million



**Secretary of State Marco Rubio, with Frank Alexis Abrego, Panama's Minister of Public Security, right, arrives to watch people board a repatriation flight bound for Colombia at Albrook Airport in Panama City, Monday, Feb. 3, 2025.**

**Associated Press**

in flights and tickets.

"Mass migration is one of the great tragedies in the modern era," Rubio said, speaking afterward in a nearby building. "It impacts countries throughout the world.

We recognize that many of the people who seek mass migration are often victims and victimized along the way, and it's not good for anyone."

Rubio then traveled to El

Salvador, where migration will again be a top agenda item. His trip comes amid a sweeping freeze in U.S. foreign assistance and stop-work orders that have shut down U.S.-funded programs targeting illegal migration and crime in Central American countries. The State Department said Sunday that Rubio had approved waivers for certain critical programs in countries he is visiting, but details

of those were not immediately available.

While Rubio was out of the country, staffers of the U.S. Agency for International Development were instructed on Monday to stay out of the agency's Washington headquarters after billionaire Elon Musk announced Trump had agreed with him to shut the agency. Thousands of USAID employees already had been laid off and programs shut down.

Rubio has not spoken publicly about any plans to shut down USAID.

Monday's deportation flight came as Trump has been threatening action against nations that will not accept flights of their nationals from the United States, and he briefly hit Colombia with penalties last week for initially refusing to accept two flights.

Panama has been more cooperative and has allowed flights of third-country deportees to land and sent migrants back before they reach the United States. Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino reaffirmed that position and agreed Sunday to withdraw from China's Belt and Road development and infrastructure initiative after Rubio warned him to reduce China's role in canal operations or face American retaliation.

Panamanian immigration officials say they have carried out 44 deportation flights carrying nearly 2,000 migrants since signing an agreement with the U.S. for financial support when Mulino entered office last July. The majority of those flown home have been Colombians, followed by Ecuadorians. □

# Another car bomb in a northern Syria city kills at least 19, mostly women



**In this photo provided by the Syrian Civil Defense White Helmets, which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, Syrian White Helmet civil defense workers inspect the area of a car bomb attack that killed at least 15 people and wounded dozens, the local Syrian civil defense reported, on the outskirts of the city of Manbij, Syria, Monday, Feb. 3, 2025.**

**Associated Press**

By **KAREEM CHEHAYEB and OMAR ALBAM**

**Associated Press**

**DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)** — Another car bomb exploded on the outskirts of a city in northern Syria on Monday, killing at least 19 people and leaving over a dozen wounded, hospital workers and emergency responders said.

Eighteen women and one man were killed, a nurse at the local hospital, Mohammad Ahmad, told The Associated Press. Another 15 women were wounded, some in critical condition, according to the local civil defense.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the blast that occurred next to a vehicle carrying agricultural workers on the outskirts of Manbij.

It was the seventh car bombing in Manbij in over a month, said Munir Mustafa, the deputy director of civil defense, warning that the attacks near Syria's second

city are a threat to Syria's efforts to bring about post-war security and economic recovery.

Manbij in northeastern Aleppo province continues to see violence two months after the fall of President Bashar Assad in an insurgent offensive.

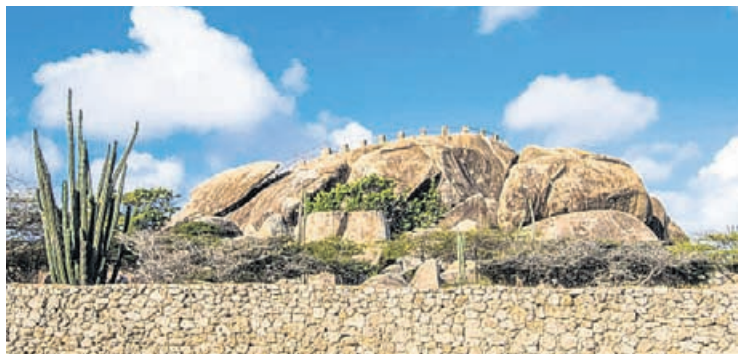
Turkish-backed factions known as the Syrian National Army have clashed with the U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. The factions took the city from the SDF in early December during the insurgency.

Not long after accusations against the SDF surfaced on social media, the SDF in a statement condemned Monday's attack and accused Ankara-backed groups of possibly being involved with the aim of causing more strife in Syria.

The statement said the SDF will communicate with Syria's new interim government in Damascus to investigate. □



## Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations



**(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your “off-road” trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.**

### Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous

natural architecture to the surrounding “mondi”\*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

### Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casi-

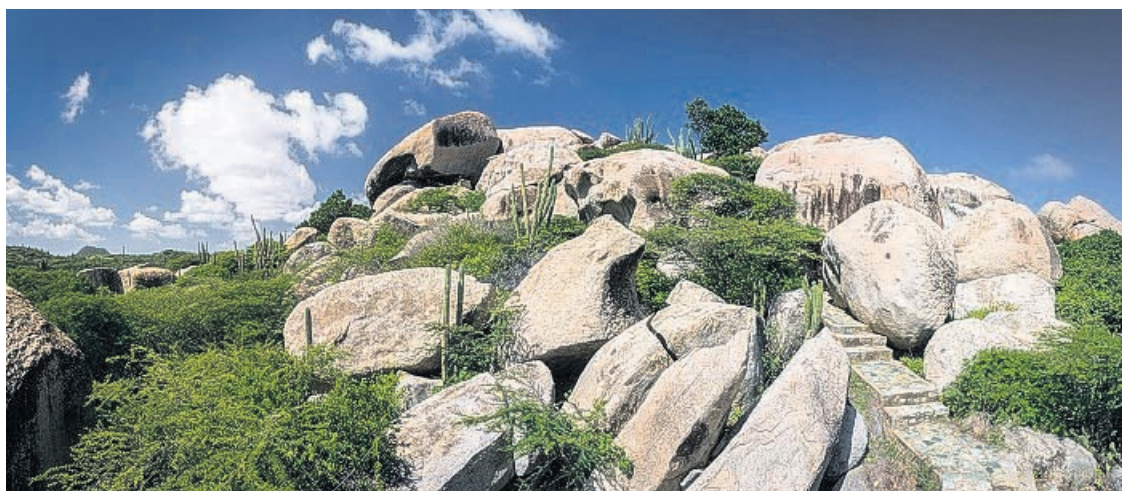


bari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great place to get refreshments and snack before continu-

ing your off-road adventure!

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

\*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! □



## The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

**(Oranjestad)—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?**

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood—so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: “kibra” (break) “hacha” (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one

among its neighboring trees to starts blooming first.

### The legend of the Kibrahacha

Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)

One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudaweche, who was a epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted to time and went to go fetch Kudaweche. Upon telling Kudaweche that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing

that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudaweche was determined to bring back Aretima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

When they arrived at the tree, they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudaweche, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aretima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aretima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The



thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aretima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers. Kudaweche, satisfied to see Aretima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the hut, Aretima's mother quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to her sick husband. Miraculously, after

just one sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the life of Aretima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □






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## Did you know about... Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 2)

(Oranjestad)—In Yesterday's issue, we've provided some basic rules when driving on the four-lane highways and roundabouts on the island. Today, we want to offer you more tips and tricks when it comes to driving on the roads and highways of Aruba.

### Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However,

there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out.

### Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit [aruba-travelguide.com](http://aruba-travelguide.com) for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

Picture credits: [aruba-travelguide.com](http://aruba-travelguide.com)



bebouwde kom



end bebouwde kom



end priority



end speed limit



intersection priority



priority



speed limit



stop sign



triangle stop sign



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## Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

### The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

### The honorees were:

Emerald Ambassadors

Mr. Ralph & Mrs. Virginia Ryan from East Hanover, New Jersey, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's Sun
- Aruba's Sand
- Aruba's friendly people
- Aruba's restaurants
- Aruba's safety

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



## A guide for the perfect picture

## Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're taking a stroll in the city center, and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Oranjestad is

full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad.

### "I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, especially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.

Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park, in front of Talk of the Town Hotel. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots

along the way!

### The sitting bull

Yes, you read that right; right in the heart of the city center, in front of the Crystal Casino in the Renaissance Mall, there is a black bull sitting on a bench, waiting for you to take a picture with it. Ok, so it's not a real bull, but "I took a picture with a sitting bull" sounds like a great conversation opener.

See if you can also spot the cow on the roof!

### Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in front of the Renaissance Mall, check out the wooden swing on the other side of the mall on Plaza Daniel Leo. Another favorite among visitors wanting a cute

snapshot for Instagram. Just pass through the Renaissance Mall and find this gem in front of the back entrance!

Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

### Renaissance Dock

Last but certainly not least, the Renaissance Dock is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Renaissance Market Place, and runs from the Renaissance Marina up to Renaissance Beach and Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas! □





## The power of Aruba

By Antoinette DeWit

Each time I return from Aruba, my Island paradise in the southern Caribbean Sea, I think about what draws me back year after year and sometimes a few times a year.

I asked Siri, one day, to tell me how far Aruba is from my home base in British Columbia Canada. She says she thinks it's about 6,300 kilometers. When she added the words "I think", I smiled and asked how long it takes to fly there. I expected her to say "does it really matter?"

Turns out the distance and the time doesn't really matter at all to anyone I know who has gone there more than once. There is a mystic about the place. It's small, quaint, clean. It's a tourist destination for fabulous beaches, purified, fresh drinking water, excellent weather, quality accommodations, attractions, activities of all sorts and local as well as international dining. The government knows that. The businesses know that. The citizens know that. Every effort is made



to please and welcome people from around the world. Every effort is made to share the citizens' pride of the Island and all it has to offer, and every citizen knows how important the tourists are to their economy and future wellbeing.

I started going there about thirty years ago after many efforts by my now deceased parents to get me

to join them there for a vacation. I kept saying no, no and no. It seemed so ridiculously far to go and no matter how hard they tried, nobody in the family took them up on their offer.

But, alas, I finally gave in. I was hooked right away! And, I have been going back every single year, sometimes as many as four times a year. The place has become somewhat like

a magnetic force, energizing, uplifting, relaxing. I now just have to go there and it has comfortably become my home away from home. Peaceful. Calming. Beautiful.

Over the years I have befriended some locals who proudly show me very interesting nooks and crannies, or introduce me to activities I'd likely never make

time for at my main home base. Now my sister and brother in law have bought in, their adult children have experienced it, and we enjoy being there together at least one visit per year.

The Island is small — maybe 15 km x 8 km, and houses about 100,000 people. It is independent but part of the Dutch Antilles. The official government language is Dutch; but, the official local language is Papiamentu and I've even taken lessons.

Be it near or far ... for me — it's never far and always near. Whether I am here or there, going there or coming back here, I close my eyes and see it; I reach out my arms and feel it; I breathe in the air and smell it; I put my ear to a conch and hear those subtle waves. And, to use the fifth sense of taste metaphorically, as a delicacy, the Island radiates the delicious taste of mystic, magic and memories — pleasant, powerful, peaceful; truly unmatched and truly my paradise on earth. □

## Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our "Dorado"

**(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Dorado", a common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Dorado.**

Dorado has many different names it can be referred to. Dral, Dorao, Drals, Drado, are some of them in Papiamentu. In English, it is also called Mahi Mahi, Dolphinfish, or Dorado. It's a good example to reflect on why there can be many names. The same fish becomes known by different common names, why? Common names come only when a group of people, to understand each other, assign a name to a fish. Mahi Mahi, for ex-

ample, comes from Hawaii and means "very strong". Dorado is based on Spanish and refers to the golden yellow color that the fish shines with under the sun. Why it's called Dolphinfish in English is not well defined and while there are several stories around this, none have been confirmed.

Dorado is found in all tropical to subtropical oceans around the world. Dorado is very popular both for recreational fishing and for consumption. It is known among fishermen as an exciting catch and a fish that puts up a good fight. Its meat is very good for consumption and it is also commercially fished for that reason.

They grow very fast, up to 2.7 inches (almost 7 cm) per week. They can live up



to a maximum of 5 years although very few reach that age. Most become adults within 1 year but many become reproductive after just 5 or 6 months and reproduce very quickly too. They live in open water on the surface most of the time. Many fish seek them around sushi lines or float-

ing objects on the sea. Often you will find a group landing together and if you keep a male on the line, often the others will stay close or can keep the group interested by giving shrimp or squid.

### Description:

Dorado has a distinctive

body. It has a large tail and its long, flat body ends in a large blunt head. Its color of yellow and green or blue makes it immediately recognizable, even with small variations in these colors.

Dorado has clear differences between adult females and males. The male is larger and can easily reach 50 to 80 pounds and has a much flatter head compared to the female. Therefore, male Dorados are also called "bull Dorado".

Dorado can be found in our waters around the island all year round, but there are periods when it is easier to find than others. □

**Source: The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).**



# The Aruban Cunukero

## From past to present

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era. Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.

### Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

1. The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;
2. Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;
3. Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;
4. Lastly you have the "Runaway Peasantries", usually comprised of runaway slaves



who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.

However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers. These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of. However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous farmers were obligated to work for the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle—large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers—a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were either once affiliated with the WIC or were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 houses/cunucus on the island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experienced its duper dry climate, many

farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming. Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while.

For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of land just to live off of. This is why the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy.

In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events.

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red.

**Photo credits: Aruba National Archives.**





## CROSSWORD

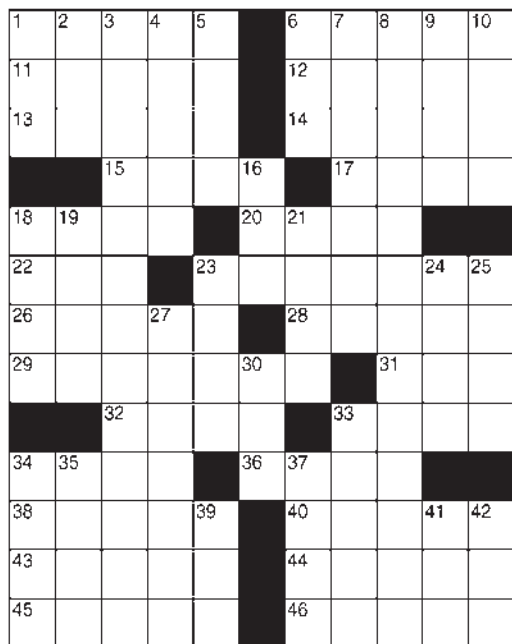
By THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

- 45 Wails  
1 Metal fasteners  
6 Some bow ties  
11 Lucy's pal  
12 Sore spots  
13 "Keen!"  
14 Guzzled  
15 Poll numbers  
17 Casino numbers  
18 Illegally off base  
20 Timber wolf  
22 Despondent  
23 Distant  
26 Make blank  
28 Make amends  
29 Pivotal  
31 Team supporter  
32 Car scar  
33 Picnic pests  
34 Paul Bunyan's blue ox  
36 Algeria neighbor  
38 Wed in haste  
40 Proper  
43 Road work markers  
44 Sneeze sound

### DOWN

- 1 Egg layer  
2 Had supper  
3 Leigh Bardugo  
4 Potpourri bit  
5 Place in a TV lineup  
6 Spot to jot  
7 Circus performer  
8 Deborah Harkness  
9 Watch over  
10 Invites  
16 Imitating  
18 Guinness of film  
19 Had on  
21 Test type  
23 Plant with fronds  
24 Med. sch. subject  
25 Urges  
27 Increase, as an incline  
30 Cash dispenser  
33 Tea party guest  
34 "Loser" singer  
35 Lotion additive  
37 Mecca native  
39 Road curve  
41 Spicy  
42 Gift from Santa



2-2

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-2

### CRYPTOQUOTE

R QJRDD VHDRHSH JGUJ DFSH

RQ UDD WFI ZHHX. R XFZ'J

PZFT U VHJJHK LHQQUNH JGUZ

JGUJ. — AUD LBBUKJZH

Cryptoquote: IN FEBRUARY THERE IS EVERYTHING TO HOPE FOR AND NOTHING TO REGRET. — PATIENCE STRONG

## Cruise ship Schedule: February 01 - 08 2025

Cruise Line	Ship	Departure	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure	Arrival
Royal Caribbean	Odyssey of the Seas	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Carnival	Carnival Vista	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Norwegian	Norwegian Bliss	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Disney	Disney Wish	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Princess	Princess Crown	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Regent	Regent Seven Seas	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Seabourn	Seabourn Odyssey	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Silversea	Silversea Silver	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Unicruise	Unicruise Odyssey	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb
Virgin	Virgin Voyages	01 Feb	02 Feb	03 Feb	04 Feb	05 Feb	06 Feb	07 Feb	08 Feb

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

### Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

### Drinking water

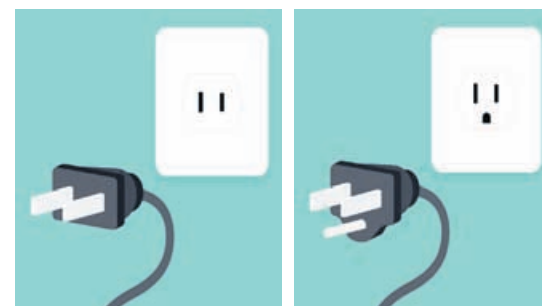
The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

### Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

### Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourists that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.





# Classifieds

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Date :8 February to 15 February 2025  
Price :\$1,800  
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5 min drive to Down Town  
10 min drive to the beach  
6 apartments all studio with pool  
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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Barcelo resort  
3 BR 3 Bath sleep 12  
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All inclusive  
Price :\$3,600 each week  
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Johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## Divi Village Golf

Eagle Beach  
2 BR 2 Bath week # 3 room 2317 / 2318  
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Price \$13,000  
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## Divi Village Golf

Eagle Beach  
Studio WK # 4 room # 2129  
Contract expire :12/31/2045  
Price :\$8000  
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## Divi Village Golf

Eagle Beach  
Studio week 5,6,7,8,9  
Room # 2350 Birdie 10  
35 weeks remaining on the contract  
Price :\$10,000 each week  
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## Divi Village

Eagle beach  
Studio wk # 5 room # 8105  
Building D 1 st floor  
Contract expire : 01/22/2037  
Price :\$8000  
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## Divi village Golf

Eagle beach  
One bedroom week # 9  
Room # 2118 birdie 3  
23 weeks remaining  
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## Barcelo Resorts

Palm beach  
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Palm Beach  
One bedroom week # 8  
All inclusive  
Price: \$15,000  
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Eagle beach  
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Room # 2002 /2012  
Phase 2  
Price :\$10,000  
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## Marriott surf club

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Two bedroom 2 bath  
Ocean side  
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## Casa Del Mar

2 BR 2 Bath week # 8 room # 1409  
Price :\$20,000  
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## Marriott Surf Club

Palm beach  
Gold season  
2 BR 2 Bath Garden view  
Price :\$10,000  
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## Condo for sale

Blue  
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Ground floor  
Price : \$ 799,000  
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## Investment opportunity

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2630 m2 lease land ( 53,820 sqf) 6 ground floor 6 first floor  
Ready to build  
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## Investment opportunity

Property land 11,667 m2  
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## HTTA

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## Eagle Resort

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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## Marriott Surf Club

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## Marriott destination points

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## Blue Condo

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Price :\$799K  
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## House for sale

Noord  
3 Bedroom 1 bath  
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## HEALTH

## DOCTOR ON DUTY

### Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm  
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### San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours  
Tel.524 8833

## PHARMACY ON DUTY

### Oranjestad:

St. Cruz: Tel.585 8028

### San Nicolas:

Seroe Preto:Tel.584 4833

## OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850  
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002  
Urgent Care 586 0448  
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic  
+297 588 0539

## EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



# Are we all aliens? NASA's returned asteroid samples hold the ingredients of life from a watery world

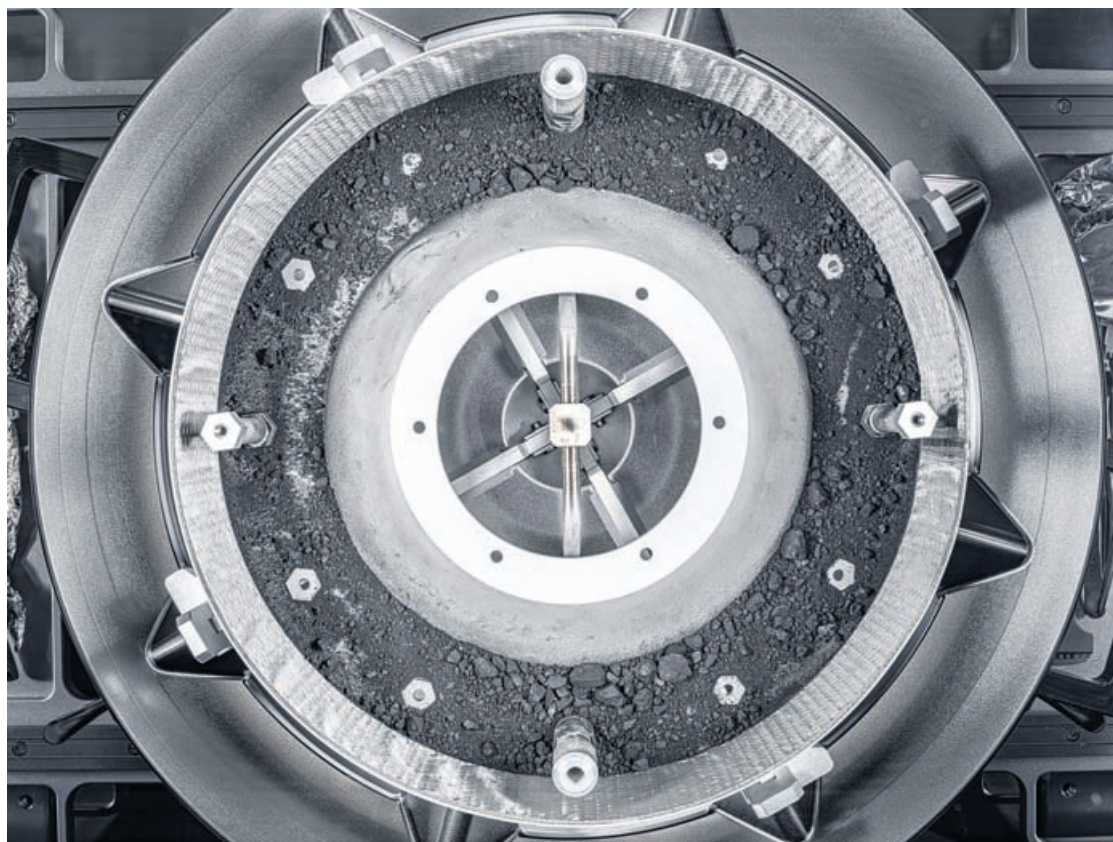
By **MARCIA DUNN**  
AP Aerospace Writer  
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.  
(AP) — Asteroid samples

fetches by NASA hold not only the pristine building blocks for life but also the salty remains of an ancient water world, scientists reported Wednesday.

The findings provide the strongest evidence yet that asteroids may have planted the seeds of life on Earth and that these ingredients were mingling with water almost right from the start.

"That's the kind of environment that could have been essential to the steps that lead from elements to life," said the Smithsonian Institution's Tim McCoy, one of the lead study authors.

NASA's Osiris-Rex spacecraft returned 122 grams (4 ounces) of dust and pebbles from the near-Earth asteroid Bennu, delivering the sample canister to the Utah desert in 2023 before swooping off after another space rock. It remains the biggest cosmic haul from beyond the moon. The two previous asteroid sample missions, by Japan, yielded considerably less material. Small amounts of Bennu's precious black grains left-overs from the solar sys-



This image provided by NASA shows a top-down view of the OSIRIS-REx Touch-and-Go-Sample-Acquisition-Mechanism (TAGSAM) head with the lid removed, revealing the remainder of the asteroid sample inside.

tem's formation 4.5 billion years ago were doled out to the two separate research teams whose studies appeared in the journals Nature and Nature Astronomy. But it was more than enough to tease out the sodium-rich minerals and confirm the presence of amino acids, nitrogen in

the form of ammonia and even parts of the genetic code. Some if not all of the delicate salts found at Bennu similar to what's in the dry lakebeds of California's Mojave Desert and Africa's Sahara would be stripped away if present in falling meteorites.

"This discovery was only possible by analyzing samples that were collected directly from the asteroid then carefully preserved back on Earth," the Institute of Science Tokyo's Yasuhito Sekine, who was not involved in the studies, said in an accompanying editorial.

Combining the ingredients of life with an environment of sodium-rich salt water, or brines, "that's really the pathway to life," said McCoy, the National Museum of Natural History's curator of meteorites. "These processes probably occurred much earlier and were much more widespread than we had thought before."

NASA's Daniel Glavin said one of the biggest surprises was the relatively high abundance of nitrogen, including ammonia. While all of the organic molecules found in the Bennu samples have been identified before in meteorites, Glavin said the ones from Bennu are valid "real extraterrestrial organic material formed in space and not a result of contamination from Earth."

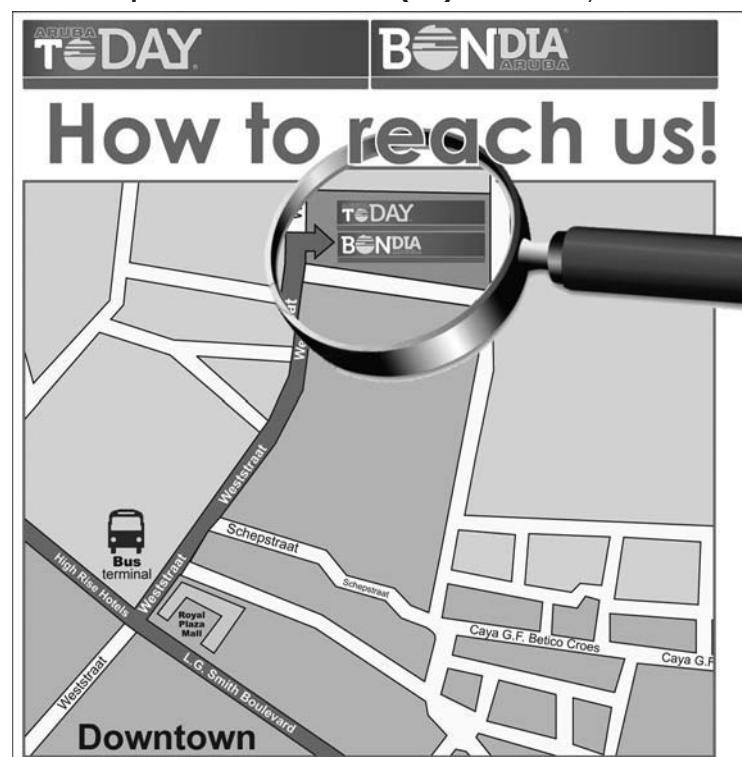
Bennu a rubble pile just one-third of a mile (one-half of a kilometer) across was originally part of a much larger asteroid that got clobbered by other space rocks. The latest results suggest this parent body had an extensive underground network of lakes or even oceans, and that the water evaporated away, leaving behind the salty clues. □

Associated Press

## Newly spotted asteroid has a tiny chance of hitting Earth in 2032

By **MARCIA DUNN**  
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.  
(AP) — A newly discovered



asteroid has a tiny chance of smacking Earth in 2032, space agency officials said Wednesday. Scientists put the odds of a strike at slightly more than 1%.

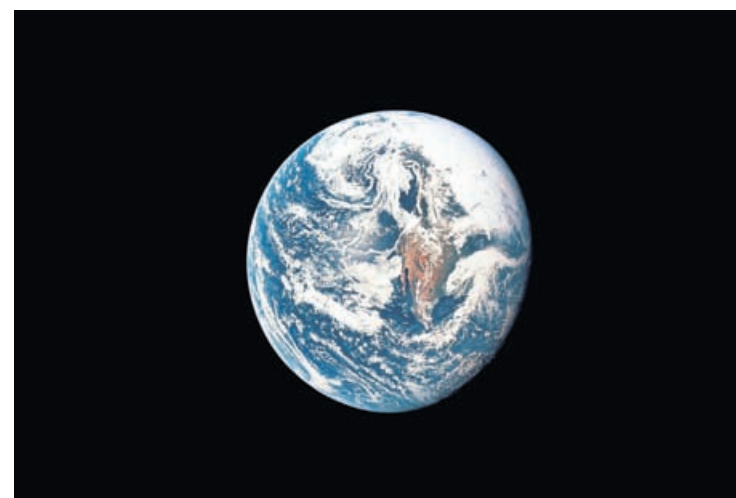
"We are not worried at all, because of this 99 percent chance it will miss," said Paul Chodas, director of NASA's Center for Near Earth Object Studies. "But it deserves attention."

First spotted last month by a telescope in Chile, the near-Earth asteroid designated 2024 YR4 is estimated to be 130 to 330 feet (40 to 100 meters) across.

Scientists are keeping close watch on the space rock, which is currently heading away from Earth. As the asteroid's path around

the sun becomes better understood, Chodas and others said there's a good chance the risk to Earth could drop to zero.

The asteroid will gradually fade from view over the next few months, according to NASA and the European Space Agency. □



This May 18, 1969 photo provided by NASA shows Earth from 36,000 nautical miles away as photographed from the Apollo 10 spacecraft during its trans-lunar journey toward the moon.

Associated Press



# Lindsey Vonn faces more criticism for competing at age 40 than Tom Brady, Lewis Hamilton

By **ANDREW DAMPF**

AP Sports Writer

**SAALBACH-HINTERGLEMME, Austria (AP)** —

When Tom Brady played in the NFL well beyond the age of 40, he wasn't considered crazy for facing 300-pound defensive linemen intent on sacking him.

When Lewis Hamilton recently got behind the wheel of a Ferrari Formula 1 car for the first time at 40, he wasn't told he's too old for the elite auto racing series.

Marcel Hirscher didn't get nearly as many pointed questions when he recently returned to ski racing after five seasons away.

So why did Lindsey Vonn face so much second guessing in Europe about her comeback at age 40 this season after spending the same time away from the sport as Hirscher?

Before Vonn returned in December, two-time Olympic champion Michaela Dorfmeister suggested that the American "should see a psychologist," adding on Austrian TV, "Does she want to kill herself?" Austrian downhill great Franz Klammer said "she's gone completely mad" and four-time overall World Cup champion Pirmin Zurbrig-



**United States' Lindsey Vonn looks on ahead of an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill training, in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Friday, Jan. 24, 2025.**

gen said that Vonn "hasn't recognized the meaning and purpose of her other life in recent years."

"I don't think I really deserved the disrespectful comments to the degree that they were given. I of course expected criticism in that, 'Is my knee safe?' That's a valid question," Vonn said Monday when she arrived at the world championships, referring to her reconstructed right knee that is now partially

titanium.

"But there were a lot of questions that had to do with me as a person and my psychological state and what life is outside of skiing. And that was completely inappropriate and disrespectful and I didn't deserve it," Vonn added. "And honestly, no one deserved it. But no one asked Marcel those questions. No one asked Marcel if his life is fulfilled outside of ski racing or if he needed to see a

psychologist. That was only directed at me. And that's pretty (messed) up."

While Hirscher specializes in the less dangerous disciplines of slalom and giant slalom, Vonn races downhill and super-G, where speeds top 80 mph (130 kph). But plenty of men have raced in downhill past the age of 40. In January 2023, 42-year-old Johan Clarey finished second in the famed Hahnenkamm downhill in Kitzbuehel, Aus-

tria setting the record for the oldest podium finisher.

Vonn showed that she can still be competitive when she finished sixth and fourth in a downhill and a super-G in St. Anton, Austria, last month. She's still rediscovering her speed and has had a few minor falls during her comeback, but she also now has had more time to regain her timing entering worlds at another Austrian resort in Saalbach-Hinterglemm.

As for the response to her return back home in the U.S., Vonn said it was "amazing."

"Everyone has been really supportive. It's honestly only in Europe that I've had any sort of criticism," Vonn said.

"A lot of women my age are really, really happy that I'm doing what I'm doing. It means a lot for them," Vonn added. "I think it means something for women, too, that we can still pursue our dreams regardless of our age. We don't have to be doing a certain thing by a certain time.

We can still be ambitious. Just because we're 40 doesn't mean it's over." Vonn wants to team with Shiffrin in the new combined event at worlds □

Associated Press

# Controlling owner Josh Harris says the Washington Commanders name is not changing

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

AP Sports Writer

**ASHBURN, Va. (AP)** — Washington Commanders controlling owner Josh Harris said Monday the team name is not changing. Harris said the name is here to stay after inheriting it when he and his group bought the team from longtime owner Dan Snyder in 2023.

"I think it's now being embraced by our team, by our culture, by our coaching staff, so, we're going with that," Harris said. "Now, in this building, the name Commanders means something. It's about players who love football, are great at football, hit hard, mentally tough, great teammates. It's really meaningful that that name is growing in meaning."

The Commanders reached the NFC championship game in quarterback Jayden Daniels' rookie year, exceeding expectations in general manager Adam

Peters and coach Dan Quinn's first season in charge.

Harris, who grew up as a Washington football fan, had previously said upon taking over that the team would not be going back to its old name that Snyder dropped in 2020. Aspects of the team's history, including old uniforms, could return, and it's unclear if there would be a new logo.

"As far as rebranding and bringing (back) our past, which obviously I grew up with and all the Super Bowl championships and our future together, you're going to see us head back towards honoring our past and bringing it together with our future," Harris said.

Asked multiple times about a new stadium, Harris reiterated talks are ongoing with Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

In August, he said 2030 was a "reasonable target" for opening. □



**The Washington Commanders logo is shown before an NFL football game in Landover, Md., Sept. 15, 2024.**

Associated Press



# The NBA trade deadline is approaching and Antetokounmpo says no player is exempt from the chaos

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP Basketball Writer

The list of NBA players that might get traded before the 3 p.m. Eastern deadline on Thursday is a long one, according to Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo.

It includes ... well, basically everybody.

"This is the world we're living in," Antetokounmpo said. "It's a business. You have to understand this. Nobody's safe. Nobody's safe."

After this weekend, he might be right.

It's hard to envision a bigger stunner than the first deal that went down over the weekend. Luka Doncic is now with the Los Angeles Lakers and Anthony Davis



Sacramento Kings guard De'Aaron Fox, right, drives past Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kenrich Williams, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Feb. 1, 2025, in Oklahoma City.

Associated Press

can get moved.

The Spurs probably won't be trading Wembanyama anytime soon, especially now that they've landed Fox to play alongside the French center. Golden State would only trade a franchise icon like Stephen Curry if he asked to be moved, which doesn't seem likely. The Lakers' LeBron James and Phoenix's Bradley Beal have no-trade clauses, meaning they control their own destinies to a certain extent.

But for everyone else, getting a middle-of-the-night call from a general manager like the ones Dallas' Nico Harrison tried to place to Doncic in the wee hours of Sunday, all of them going unanswered is at least possible.

"At the end of the day, and I've said this in the past, you get evaluated every single day," Antetokounmpo said. "You don't take nothing for granted. Being an All-Star, you don't take it for granted. Being able to go out there and put on the jersey and represent your team, you don't take that for granted. Being out there and representing your family, you don't take that for granted. Every second that you play an NBA game, I love it. I try to play with joy."

Speaking of joy, or lack thereof, another past All-Star and All-NBA selection in Jimmy Butler is still out there and desperately seeking a way out of Miami. He has as many game appearances in the last month as he does team suspensions: three games, three suspensions.

For Butler to get moved, with Phoenix believed to be his preferred destination, it's very possible that another All-Star-caliber player or at least someone with a big salary would have to be changing addresses as well simply to make the contract math work. "It's surprising, for sure," Philadelphia coach Nick Nurse said of superstar-level players like Doncic and Davis getting traded. □

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